



## COUNCIL MINUTES

February 11, 2010

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session in the Community Room of the Central Police Station, 120 N. Robson, on February 11, 2010 at 7:37 a.m.

### COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Scott Smith  
Alex Finter  
Dina Higgins  
Dennis Kavanaugh  
Dave Richins  
Scott Somers

### COUNCIL ABSENT

Kyle Jones

### OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady

Councilmember Somers called the Study Session to order in the absence of Mayor Smith, who arrived at 7:42 a.m.

Mayor Smith excused Vice Mayor Jones from the entire meeting.

1. Hear a presentation, discuss and provide direction on the implementation of recommendations in the Fiesta District Design Handbook.

Economic Development Project Manager Patrick Murphy displayed a PowerPoint presentation **(see Attachment 1)** and noted that the Fiesta District Project is a joint revitalization effort between the public and private sectors, which includes businesses and property owners. He referred to the diagram (see page 4 of Attachment 1) that identified the investment plans for the District. Mr. Murphy outlined the following key objectives:

- Develop a unified District brand.
- Identify transportation and pedestrian linkages.
- Develop an Implementation Plan.

Mr. Murphy stated that a total of \$500 million in private investment in the District has been completed or is in process, and he cited the investments made by Banner Hospital, Mesa Community College and the Fiesta Mall. He said that this presentation would address three areas: the streetscape, the branding signage and the Fiesta pathway.

Mr. Murphy said that the streetscape would provide amenities that animate and add visual interest with the individual streets designed to have a distinct character and an identity that reflects the District's land use, character and function. He displayed diagrams and artistic

renderings of the proposed design concepts (see pages 7 through 11 of Attachment 1). He said that staff would like to move forward with the initial design process at an estimated cost of \$50,000, after which options would be presented to the Council for consideration.

Addressing the topic of branding signage, Mr. Murphy displayed examples (see pages 12 and 13 of Attachment 1), which include illuminated signs, non-illuminated signs and a combination of the two types of signs. He referred to the diagram that indicates the proposed locations of the different types of signs in the Fiesta District (see page 14 of Attachment 1).

In response to questions from Councilmember Richins, Transportation Director Dan Cleavenger advised that the life cycle for both the metal and the internally illuminated signs is in the range of ten to twelve years. He noted that there would be some maintenance involved, and he advised that electricity costs for all of the illuminated signs would total approximately \$10,000 per year. He added that although illuminated signs appear to be more visible for the aging population, the metal signs with the large font are also very visible.

Mr. Murphy continued the presentation by addressing the proposed pedestrian pathways (see page 15 of Attachment 1). He noted that the City received a grant for slightly less than \$1 million from the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) for the development of eight pedestrian nodes or gathering places in the Fiesta District. Mr. Murphy explained that each pedestrian node would be a micro-park that includes a shelter, trash receptacles, landscaping and other amenities. He added that some of the proposed locations are on private property and therefore, the design process requires partnerships with the property owners.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Kavanaugh regarding the fact that the MAG grant was awarded several years ago, Mr. Cleavenger confirmed that utilizing a portion of the grant funding for the design process would ensure that the funds would continue to be available.

Mayor Smith noted that access to private property could be very difficult. He suggested that the City initially concentrate on public property areas. He said that private property owners may be more willing to participate when they see the City making an investment or taking aggressive action to move forward with the project.

In response to a question from Councilmember Richins, Deputy Transportation Director Mike James identified the areas where the City could move forward.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the MAG grant is for construction of the nodes; and that the pathways would connect the nodes.

Councilmember Kavanaugh expressed concurrence with the Mayor's comments that the City should take noticeable action. He suggested that the Council accept staff's recommendation for Alternative No. 1, which states: "Direct staff to bring back all three action items; streetscape project (\$50,000), branding signage (\$123,000), and the pedestrian nodes/pathway (\$50,000) for further discussion as part of the FY10/11 budget process."

Mayor Smith stated the opinion that changing the sign at Southern and Longmore in the heart of the Fiesta District would provide a greater impact than changing the sign at Extension and Grove. He further stated that because funds would not be available to address the entire District at one time, starting in the center of the District and gradually phasing in the other areas as

funds are available would maximize the impact. Mayor Smith noted that the private sector has made a significant investment in the area, and he stressed the importance of the City demonstrating its commitment by moving forward.

Further discussion ensued relative to the fact through traffic in the Fiesta District should be encouraged to remain on the freeway; that it would be difficult to distinguish between through traffic and destination traffic in the Fiesta District; and that a similar concern exists regarding through traffic in the downtown area.

Mayor Smith said that the choice for the Fiesta District is between facilitating traffic efficiency or creating a District that can be economically viable, and that his choice would be to ensure that the Fiesta District is an economically viable destination. He noted that freeways have facilitated urban sprawl by providing the capacity for individuals to live in areas that are great distances from their place of employment.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the fact that traffic counts decrease as density in an area increases; and that the City should work with the property owners to encourage a different model for the Fiesta Mall parking lot.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Somers, City Manager Christopher Brady advised that the possibility exists that the street improvements in the Fiesta District could be funded separately from the existing Bond Program authorization. He said because the planned street projects in the Bond Program are now underway or are out for bid, staff should know very shortly the amount of the remaining balance in the authorization. Mr. Brady explained that as a result of the current economic conditions, significant savings have been realized on the Street Improvement Program, which could then be utilized for the Fiesta District design concept. He added that staff would like to update the Council in approximately two weeks on the status of the Bond funds. Mr. Brady stated the opinion that funding for the "path/paseo" portion of the plan does not fall within the parameters of the Bond Program. He noted that although \$1 million in grant funding is available, the grant requires a contribution by the City in the amount of \$400,000.

Referring to the map of pathways (see page 15 of Attachment 1), Councilmember Richins said that pedestrians typically seek the shortest distance. He suggested that pathways be developed organically to provide a connection from where people in the area live to the destination.

Mayor Smith stated the opinion that Southern Avenue should create an identity for the Fiesta District and draw people into the District.

Mr. Brady suggested that staff present the Council with specific alternatives in a few weeks.

Mayor Smith said that the consensus of the Council is that the Fiesta District should be designed to create a place where people want to go to rather than drive past.

In response to questions from Councilmember Higgins, Mr. Brady stated that savings from the Bond Program for streets were realized because of the favorable construction market that currently exists. He clarified that the voter-approved Bond Program included a list of specific street projects that have been or are being addressed, after which the remaining funds can be utilized to address other street projects.

Mayor Smith explained that the City cannot deviate from the list of projects approved by the voters, but once those projects have been addressed the remaining funds are legally available to address other street-related projects.

Mr. Brady noted that the Bond proposal approved by the voters included \$10 million that was designated for "other street projects."

Mayor Smith said that the Fiesta District, which was once the economic engine of the City, presents a unique situation in that the area now costs the City money as a result of blight, declining property values and increased public safety expense. He added that the private sector has made substantial investments in the area, and he stated the opinion that the City should contribute to that effort.

Mayor Smith noted that the consensus of the Council was that staff should bring the Fiesta District proposal forward again in two weeks with a focus on implementation rather than the concept.

Mr. Brady stated that in two weeks staff would seek direction regarding the dollar amount to be allocated to the project.

Mayor Smith thanked staff for the presentation.

2. Hear reports on meetings and/or conferences attended.

Councilmember Richins: Non-profit project in Ajo, Arizona.

Councilmember Kavanaugh: Joint Council meeting with the Dobson Ranch Association.

3. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

Thursday, February 11, 2010, 9:00 a.m. – Community & Neighborhood Services Committee

Thursday, February 18, 2010, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Thursday, February 18, 2010, 9:00 a.m. – Intergovernmental Affairs Committee

Monday, February 22, 2010, 3:30 p.m. – Audit & Finance Committee

Monday, February 22, 2010, TBA – Study Session

Monday, February 22, 2010, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

4. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

Mayor Smith announced that the Council would take a short break at 8:25 a.m., after which the Mayor reconvened the Study Session at 8:35 a.m.

5. Hear a presentation, discuss and take a tour of the Fusion Center.

Sergeant Kevin Baggs displayed a PowerPoint presentation (**see Attachment 2**) to provide information on the East Valley Gang & Information Fusion Center, which was launched in September of 2007. He said that prior to creating the Fusion Center each community addressed crimes independently, except for monthly meetings of burglary detectives. Sergeant Baggs explained that two or more communities could be directing resources to solve crimes committed by the same individual or groups of individuals. Sergeant Baggs referred to the map that outlines the areas included in the Fusion Center (see page 3 of Attachment 2). He noted that criminals also take advantage of improved transit and freeway access.

Sergeant Baggs advised that the Fusion Center mission statement includes the objectives of streamlining operations and enhancing crime-fighting efforts. He reported that crimes are being cleared more quickly and suspects are being arrested. He cited the example of one jurisdiction having the first three letters of a license plate related to a crime and another jurisdiction had the remaining letters. Sergeant Baggs stated that the focus of the Fusion Center is gang activity that extends across jurisdictional lines and crimes committed by repeat offenders and career criminals. He said that the combined resources represent the equivalent of nine full-time employees assigned by the participating agencies on a rotational basis for a three-week period.

Sergeant Baggs said the Fusion Center provides a central location for an officer to obtain information that in the past required phone calls to several agencies. He reported that 2,700 sworn officers in 41 agencies receive the bi-weekly bulletins, time-critical bulletins and case coordination information. Sergeant Baggs stated that investigations are being completed more quickly and more efficiently than in the past. He provided information for 2008 and 2009 on number of requests, events, cases, projects and bulletins addressed by the Fusion Center (see page 5 of Attachment 2).

Sergeant Baggs concluded the presentation at 8:52 a.m., after which the Council and staff were taken on a tour of the Fusion Center.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

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SCOTT SMITH, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 11th day of February, 2010. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

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Attachments (2)